

Remarks

Reconsideration of claims 1-48 and consideration of new claims 49-56 is respectfully requested. Support for new claims 49-56 is provided on page 6, lines 8-17, and page 8, Tables 2 and 3.

The rejection of claims 1-48 under 35 U.S.C. 103 (a) as unpatentable over Wrue et al (US 6,143,210) is respectfully traversed. As stated in the Official Action, Wrue describes applying a vacuum nozzle to a surface of the lens to hold the lens in place. The vacuum nozzle as well as the adhered lens is then moved in a direction "normal to and away from the mold" thereby separating the lens from the mold. In other words, the lens is moved upwards in the z-direction away from the mold portion. Wrue also describes a mold configuration in which a mold portion 20 can "slightly rock on pin [mold portion] 32". The applied vacuum pulls upward on lens 11 and the rocking movement of the mold portion 20 facilitates the release of the lens from the mold 20. The examiner alleges that this "rocking motion would certainly impose force components between the lens and the mold in the x and y directions -i.e., in a first linear direction and a second linear direction", and therefore improperly concludes that the claimed method is obvious over this rocking motion. Official Action, page 2. Applicants respectfully disagree.


Applicants respectfully submit that there is no teaching or suggestion in Wrue to tangentially move the lens relative to the concave mold portion. Rather, Wrue describes moving or rocking the concave mold portion 20 about pin portion 32. The lens 11, which remains in contact with the concave mold portion 20, moves with the mold portion 20. As a result, there is no teaching or suggestion in Wrue of any x or y displacement of the lens 11 relative to the concave mold portion 20. In particular, there is no teaching or suggestion in Wrue of "moving the lens in a first linear direction" followed by "moving the lens in a second linear direction". See, claims 3, 5, 6, 8-11, 15-19, 21-24, 26-30, 32-35, 38-42 and 43-47.

The claimed methods for removing a hydrated contact lens from a mold comprise "moving the lens in a pattern tangential to the surface of the lens", and not the moving of the mold portion 20 by forces imparted by the nozzle element 71 as described by Wrue.

For the reasons stated, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 1-48 be withdrawn. A favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Please charge all fees that are due with the submission of this Amendment to Deposit Account No. 02-1425.

Respectfully submitted,


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